Amendment to the Claims

1 (Currently Amended). A method for network planning, comprising the steps of:

estimating demand for a plurality of services to be provided by a network over a period of time;

translating said demand for said plurality of services into required bandwidth flows using forecasted data to determine network elements that may be used for use in said network over said period of time to provide said plurality of services; and

forecasting network growth over said period of time based upon said determination of network elements that may be used and current network resources; and

forecasting financial metrics; and

generating a forecasted profit and loss statement based upon said demand for said plurality of services, said network growth and said financial metrics.

2 (Currently Amended). A method as in claim 1, wherein said translating step comprises:

setting a utilization threshold for each of said network elements per network element;

estimating bandwidth flows for each of said plurality of services;

determining said network elements that may be used based upon said estimated bandwidth flows and said utilization threshold; and

generating a network model comprising said network elements that may be used.

3 (Original). A method as in claim 1, wherein said forecasting financial metrics step comprises the steps of:

forecasting operating expenses over said period of time based upon said demand for said plurality of services and said determination of network elements that may be used; and

forecasting capital expenditures over said period of time based upon said determination of network elements that may be used.

4 (Original). A method as in claim 3, wherein said forecasting financial metrics step further comprises forecasting revenue based upon said demand for said plurality of services.

5 (Original). A method as in claim 4, wherein said forecasting financial metrics step further comprises depreciating said capital expenditures forecast to generate a capital expense depreciation forecast.

6 (Original). A method as in claim 5, wherein said forecasting financial metrics step further comprises forecasting an operating income based upon said operating expenses forecast, said capital expenditures forecast, and said capital expense depreciation forecast.

7 (Original). A method as in claim 6, wherein said forecasting financial metrics step further comprises forecasting a net income based upon said operating income forecast and other expenses.

8 (Original). A method as in claim 7, further comprising a step of determining a net change in network elements based upon said capital expenditures forecast, said capital expense depreciation forecast and said net income forecast.

9 (Currently Amended). A method as in claim 7, wherein said ~~forecasting financial metrics step further comprises~~ generating ~~a~~ <u>said</u> forecasted profit and loss statement <u>further includes generating said forecasted profit and loss statement based on said net income</u>.

10 (Original). A method as in claim 9, wherein said forecasted profit and loss statement comprises a cash flow analysis.

11 (Currently Amended).A method as in claim 1, wherein said method is ~~substantially~~ automated.

12 (Currently Amended). A method for forecasting profitability of a network carrier utilizing at least one network model having a plurality of network elements comprising the steps of:

estimating demand for a plurality of services to be provided by a network over a period of time;

estimating bandwidth flows for each of said plurality of services <u>using forecasted data</u>;

determining a network model comprising a plurality of network elements based upon said estimated bandwidth flows and a utilization threshold <u>for each of said plurality of network elements</u> ~~per network element~~;

forecasting network growth over said period of time based upon said network model and current network resources;

generating a forecasted profit and loss statement based upon said demand for said plurality of services and said network model.

13 (Currently Amended). A method as in claim 12, further comprising the step of determining if said network growth is financially ~~feasible~~ <u>responsible</u> based upon said forecasted profit and loss statement.

14 (Original). A method as in claim 12, wherein said generating a forecasted profit and loss statement step comprises the steps of:

      forecasting operating expenses over said period of time based upon said demand for said plurality of services and said network model; and

      forecasting capital expenditures over said period of time based upon said network model.

15 (Currently Amended). A method as in claim 14, wherein said generating a forecasted profit and loss statement step further comprises the steps of:

      forecasting revenue;

      forecasting operating income based upon said revenue forecast, said operating expenses forecast and said capital expenditures forecast;

      forecasting other expenses; and

      ~~generating a forecast~~ forecasting net income.

16 (Currently Amended). A method as in claim 12, wherein said method is ~~substantially~~ automated.